

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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O 131327Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7711

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 11936

STADIS//////////

FOLLOWING REPEAT BOMBAY 2880 SENT ACTION NEW DELHI
13 AUG 76.

QUOTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOMBAY 2880

STADIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: TECH IN

SUBJ: TARAPUR: CANADIANS ON US RAPP HEAVY WATER

REF: STATE 200384

1. AS REPORTED IN BOMBAY 2132 SETHNA WAS MOST EMPHATIC IN HIS CONVERSATION WITH KRATZER IN URGING THAT US AVOID POSITION OF ARGUING CANADA'S CASE ON RAPP I HEAVY WATER WITH INDIA. HE EMPHASIZED THAT THIS WOULD BE VIEWED BY MANY INDIAN OFFICIALS AS CONFIRMATION OF THEIR BELIEF THAT WE HAD STIMULATED CANADA TO TAKE TOUGH LINE IN PRESSING FOR BASIC CHANCES IN INDIA'S NUCLEAR POLICY. CANADIAN NOTE REFERRED TO IN REFTEL SEEMS TO INVITE US TO TAKE A POSITION FROM WHICH SETHNA BELIEVES THERE IS NO SATISFACTORY OUTLET.

2. I BELIEVE WE SHOULD AVOID AS LONG AS POSSIBLE ANY DIP INTO
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THESE MESSY WATERS. SETHNA HAS ALREADY TOLD US ON MANY OCCASIONS,

INCLUDING THE KRATZER VISIT (PARA 16 OF BOMBAY 2132), THAT HE IS WORKING FOR AN INDIAN GOVERNMENT DECISION TO RETAIN THE RAPP SAFEGUARDS. HIS CURRENT PLAN ENVISAGES GOI INDORSEMENT OF A STRAIGHTFORWARD CONTINUATION OF THE SAFEGUARDS PROVIDED IN THE IAEA-CANADA-INDIA TRILATERAL, BUT WITH CANADA DROPPING OUT OF AGREEMENT SINCE IT IS NOT COMPLETING ITS CONTRIBUTION TO RAPP. SINCE CANADA SAYS IT IS WILLING TO WITHDRAW ITS REQUEST FOR REMOVAL OF THE HEAVY WATER IF THE SAFEGUARDS ARE SATISFACTORY CANNOT THIS TASK OF CERTIFYING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SAFEGUARDS BE LEFT TO THE IAEA? CONCEIVABLY THE IAEA MIGHT OBTAIN SOME UPGRADING OF THE SAFEGUARDS IN THE RENEWAL PROCESS. THE FINAL ARRANGEMENT WOULD OF COURSE HAVE TO BE APPROVED BY CANADA. THE LATTER OF COURSE WOULD STILL HAVE ITS SUBSTITUTION OBLIGATION TO US, BUT THAT WOULD REMAIN EVEN IF THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONTINUING THE SAFEGUARDS WERE MADE BY THE US AS A DIRECT PARTICIPANT.

3. THERE IS ANOTHER REASON, PERHAPS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT, FOR AVOIDING DIRECT US SPONSORSHIP OF NEW ARRANGEMENTS FOR LEAVING THE US SUPPLIED RAPP I HEAVY WATER IN INDIA. THIS HEAVY WATER IS BEING USED IN A REACTOR WHOSE WASTE FUEL IS INTENDED TO BE RECYCLED AT THE TARAPUR PLUTONIUM SEPARATION FACILITY. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT WE WOULD BE OPENING OURSELVES TO THE CHARGE THAT WE WOULD BE TAKING A FRESH, POSITIVE ACT TO ABET THE UTILIZATION OF THIS PLANT, IF WE WERE TO BECOME A DIRECT PARTY TO A RENEWAL OF THE SAFEGUARDS ARRANGEMENTS FOR RAPP I. THIS COULD APPEAR TO MANY TO BE INCONSISTENT WITH OUR REFUSAL TO LET US-SUPPLIED TAPS FUEL BE REPROCESSED AT TARAPUR, EVEN THOUGH SUCH REPROCESSING WOULD RENDER MORE ECONOMICAL THE RETURN OF THE PLUTONIUM IN THAT SPENT FUEL TO THE US.

4. IN THIS RESPECT, I UNDERSTAND THE IAEC IS ALREADY CAPABLE OF MAKING MIXED OXIDE FUEL FOR USE IN ITS CANDU REACTORS, EVEN THOUGH IT CANNOT DO SO FOR THE TARAPUR REACTOR. THE RAPP SPENT-FUEL IS NOT NEARLY SO HIGHLY IRRADIATED (6,000 MEGAWATT DAYS AS COMPARED WITH 20,000 MEGAWATT DAYS FOR TARAPUR FUEL) AND THE THREE FOOT CANDU RODS ARE MUCH MORE EASILY SHIELDED AND HANDLED THAN THE TWELVE FOOT TARAPUR RODS. I WOULD EXPECT THAT AS SOON AS THERE IS A SUFFICIENT ACCUMULATION OF RAPP I SPENT FUEL THE IAEC WILL PROCEED TO SEPARATE OUT THE PLUTONIUM AND COMMENCE

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MAKING MIXED OXIDE ASSEMBLIES FOR USE IN THE RAPP REACTORS. IN FACT OUR REFUSAL TO LET THEM REPROCESS THE TARAPUR FUEL MAY WELL ACCELERATE THEIR USE OF RAPP SPENT FUEL IN ORDER TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THERE IS AN ECONOMIC USE NOW FOR THE PLUTONIUM PLANT. COURTNEY

UNQUOTE.

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